

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

Deglet Noor is the major date variety grown and packed in the United States. The crop is increasingly attacked by insects while ripening on the palm, especially carob moth. These pests are presently a serious threat to the livelihood of both conventional and organic date growers. Infestation rates already average 10% to 20%. Malathion, the only insecticide registered for use on dates, is ineffective because the insects have developed resistance. Such broad-spectrum, organophosphate pesticides are under heavy regulatory pressure because of the hazards they pose to workers, the community and the environment. The present invention provides a physical barrier in the form of cloth bag to exclude insects. This date-bunch cover also protects the on-tree crop from birds, heavy rain, high winds, and sunburn. The cover is composed of a flexible fabric, preferably white, woven, open-mesh polyester, which allows free circulation of air throughout the fruit cluster. Layering the fabric on top of the bunch provides rain protection. Accordingly, many advantages over prior art are realized in terms of effect upon the fruit and economy of use. The manner and time of installation are crucial, and thus described in detail. The cover is durable, light-weight and reusable. Additionally, the seams are overedged with color-coded thread for the purpose of identification.